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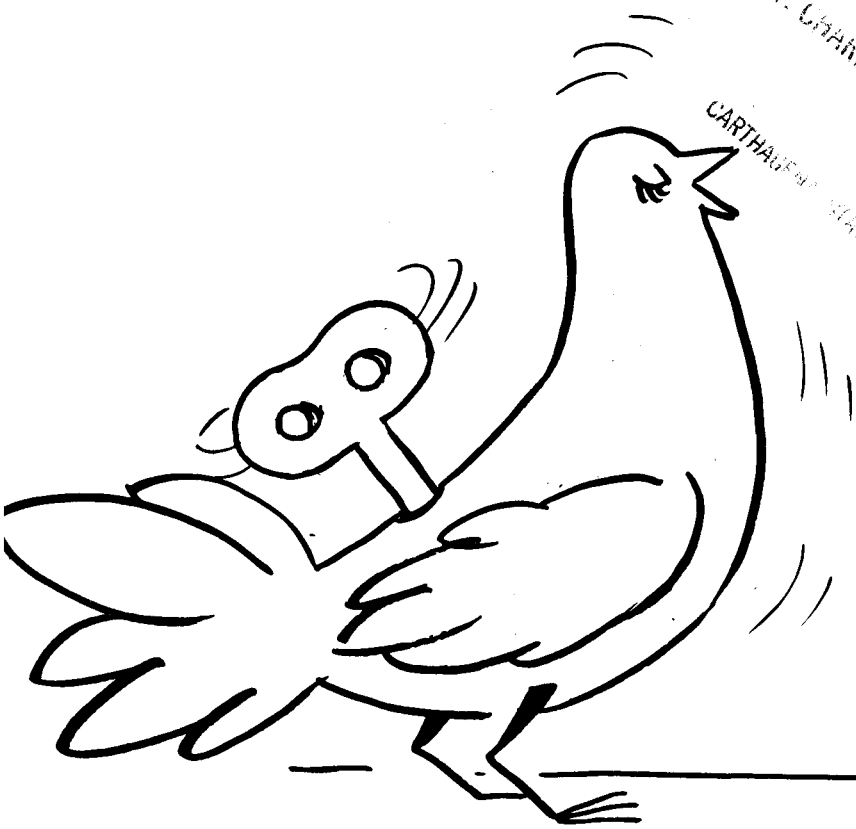

NIXON'S VIETNAM STRATEGY

GABRIEL KOLKO

THE STANDBY DRAFT
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NOTES FOR A NEW REALISM
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NOT SO LITTLE WOMEN
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GURUS AND ENCOUNTERS
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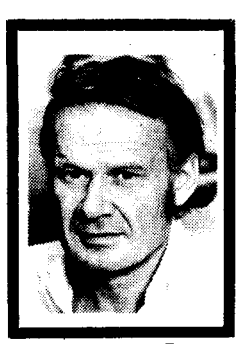

MICHAEL MURRAY

THE LOUDS OF SANTA BARBARA

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NEWS & VIEWS

Jesus in Israel

Does Jesus get a fair shake in the textbooks of Israel's schools? Considerably better than Jews get in many textbooks of the Christian Occident, according to Pinchas Lapide in the March 7 *Christian Century*. Writes Lapide:

"1. Nowhere in [Israeli] schoolbooks is Jesus blamed, implicitly or explicitly, for the guilt of the later church in promoting anti-Judaism; nor are any conclusions drawn retrospectively from the church to the Nazarene.

"2. Jesus' Jewishness — which all these texts take for granted—permits of a wide interpretation of his historic role. He is variously dealt with as messianic pretender, hastener of the End Days, demagogue, preacher of morality, patriotic rebel against the pagan yoke. But when this Jewish Jesus suffers on a Roman cross, the authors unanimously identify with him.

"3. "Though several texts speak of Jesus' 'deviation' from the normative Judaism of his day, passages emphasizing his Torah-loyalty, his Bible-centeredness and his Jewish ethos by far predominate."

Lapide, a Canadian by birth and Israeli by choice, says that "next to the Gospels, which have rightly been described as documents of Jewish faith, the schoolbooks of Israel contain what is undoubtedly the most favorable image of Jesus ever offered by Jews to a generation of their youth."

He comments that when he compares the "Jesus image" of the Israeli textbooks with the "Jewish image" found in schoolbooks elsewhere, a quarter-century after Auschwitz, "feelings of frustration and despair overtake one."

'Jesus Saves'

There's no end to how American religious gimmickry can make Jesus save.

An outfit in Martin, Tenn., has Jesus saving from burglars through a line of padlocks and lock-fasteners featuring Jesus and the Bible ("try locking with faith").

Not to be outdone, a New York firm has Jesus saving through playing cards called the "Jesus Deck."

The Jesus locks are the brainchild of a University of Tennessee professor, Carl H. Giles. By designing doorplates, padlocks, lock-fasteners, etc., with pictures of Jesus and the Bible on them, he would make the country safe for property-owners.

"Many men will not jam a jimmying tool in the face of Christ, the Lord and Savior," explains Giles. "They will not break a lock shrouded with a picture of the Bible on it."

Brilliant; only one drawback: what about nighttime thiefs? Giles' locks apparently don't glow in the dark. A serious deficiency; maybe he should research Catholic technology and check out those old fluorescent rosaries and Infant of Prague statues.

The "Jesus Deck" playing cards seem to have no comparable limitation. They've got four suits (Get it? The four Gospels); 13 cards per suit (each bearing biblical verse, idea, event, etc.); two jokers (inscribed with 1 Corinthians 4:10: "Here we are, fools for the sake of Christ"—which may be cutting a little close to the bone).

You don't play blackjack or strip poker with these cards. You're into a "Game of Witness," similar to Gin Rummy. Two people play and the winner is the first to assemble a four-card sequence. After calling out "Gin"—errrr, "Witness," the winner reads aloud the scripture text on the four sequence cards. Pop! Instant inspiration and a deepened faith.

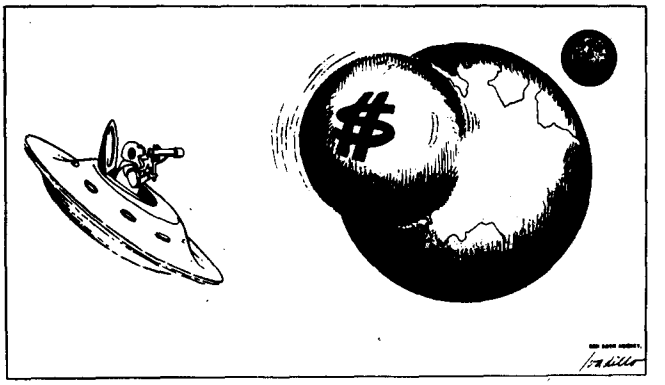
The "Jesus Deck" is Gamemasters, Inc.'s gift to America. Credited with a hand in devising the thing: James F. Colaianni, late of the Liturgical Conference. Next we may hear that Madalyn Murray O'Hair is hawking St. Christopher medals.

A Vietnam Ghost

The Economist of London assays the American foreign trade-dollar crisis:

President Nixon blames "unfair foreign barriers to American exports"; the AFL-CIO blames "the rise of multinational corporations" which "take their capital and their technology abroad in order to flood the American market with the products of low-paid foreign labor"; others—"an appreciable group"—blame "the quixotic generosity of American import policy and demand higher tariffs and more quotas."

But, reminds *The Economist*, "the foreign payments difficulties of the United States can be seen as consequences of the inflationary financing of the Vietnam war in the 1960s."



Maturing Catholicism

U.S. Catholic mailed to a representative sample of subscribers advance copies of an article by Father John Reedy, CSC, noting that Catholics are going to have to learn to live with "unanswered questions."

Results:

—71 percent agreed that "people should follow their own sincere consciences, even when they come in conflict with the teaching authorities in the church";

—91 percent agreed that "a religious truth worthy of belief should welcome continual and forceful questioning of it by those who are expected to believe";

—58 percent agreed that "the adult Catholic ought to be personally convinced before giving his assent to any teaching of the church";

—83 percent agreed that "there are many religious questions for which the Catholic church has no answer."

Odds and Ends

—Justice in America Department: Donald and Patricia Grumbles, who were remanded to jail after they refused to testify at grand jury hearings into the Camden draft board raid of August, 1971, were released on March 1. The two had been held for 14 months.

—Astounded by a resolution in the New York State Assembly describing Vietnam as a war "in support of liberty and freedom for all men" and linking it "to the precepts that have made America such a tower of strength among the nations of the world," Assemblyman Franz S. Leichter of Manhattan rose with the facts. "This is a lot of bunk," said Leichter. "We were fighting for Thieu and bamboo cages for his political opponents." Boos, then flag-waving speeches. The resolution carried overwhelmingly.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Social Gospel

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: George Dunne's "personal memoir about the Gospel and 'social subjects'" ["The Winds of Change," January 26, 1973] was strikingly perceptive. He points to a very real problem in his comments about the lack of integration of social justice topics into the work of theologians, spiritual directors, and educators. In the United States there are several continuing indications of this lamentable lack. What top Catholic schools of theology have strong programs in social ethics, or what major Catholic theologians are reflecting on contemporary problems (other than problems in medical ethics)? Why is there no strong social justice thrust in the spirituality study programs or the new religious renewal and formation institutes (Jesuits certainly must take some blame here)? Why does the new "Catechetical Directory" not place the same emphasis on the Gospel imperative for social action that the 1971 Roman Synod of Bishops did? We can strongly hope that the pervasive stress on education to justice in the U.S. Bishops' recent "To Teach as Jesus Did" will be implemented in concrete programs in this country.

The Synod spoke of "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world" as a "constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel." Until our theologians, spiritual directors, and educators begin addressing themselves to "social subjects," we are giving and getting less than the "full Gospel" in our Christian communities.

(REV.) WILLIAM F. RYAN, S.J.
Program Director,
Center of Concern

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

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ABORTION: NEXT ROUND

Among predictable developments following the January 22 Supreme Court decision striking down restrictive abortion laws in the United States were juridical problems for medical personnel and institutions with religious and ethical objections to easy and indiscriminate abortions. These developments have not been long in coming. A bill in the Oregon Legislature would require Catholic hospitals to admit patients for abortion operations; Wisconsin is faced with a measure threatening the license of a doctor or nurse who refused to perform an abortion; and Senator Frank Church told Congress of a federal district court action in Montana which compelled a Catholic hospital in Billings to allow its facilities to be used for a sterilization operation—quite a different medical procedure from an abortion, to be sure, but still contrary to traditional Catholic morality codes. What is significant in the latter instance is that the sterilization operation was ordered on legal grounds some would use to force reluctant hospitals to perform abortion services: it was the recipient of public funds under the Hill-Burton Act.

Thousands of hospitals throughout the country have been built, remodeled, enlarged, modernized or equipped under the provisions of the Hill-Burton Act, including a substantial number of the 718 Catholic general hospitals, institutions which last year treated more than 23 million patients. Equally large numbers of these hospitals have received funds for research and other projects under government-sponsored National Institutes of Health programs, a detail which could increase the legal jeopardy of these institutions should a precedent be established whereby courts or legislatures made receipt of public funds a determinant in what public services a medical institution performed. Hospitals that received Hill-Burton funds would seem to be particularly vulnerable, since these funds are extended on conditions which, surprisingly, need not be prescribed by the government prior to acceptance of the grant or loan. It is noted, for instance, that the requirement on hospitals funded through the Hill-Burton Act to provide set amounts of care for charity patients is a condition laid on most hospitals *after* they had obtained federal money. There is certainly nothing objectionable about that condition. However, its post-factum application points up the vulnerability of hospitals that have received Hill-Burton funds to government disposition and government mandate.

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Legislative action to protect hospitals from provision of law or government regulation requiring them to perform services that violate religious precepts, such as abortion and sterilization, has been initiated by Senator Frank Church of Idaho. Church's measure—Senate Joint Resolution 64—would also protect the religious and ethical beliefs of doctors, nurses and health-care personnel, as these relate to their professional practices. The measure has been referred to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, and public hearings are expected later in the spring, perhaps before the Subcommittee on Health headed by Senator Edward Kennedy.

Interestingly enough, the resolution is attracting supporters across a broad ideological spectrum, including liberals like Proxmire and Biden and conservatives like Eastland and Byrd. Some are attracted by the basic anti-abortion features of the resolution, but some also see it safeguarding religious freedoms and civil rights and perhaps heading off efforts in the direction of a Constitutional amendment, a move which many on both sides of the abortion issue fear would protract divisiveness over abortion in state after state over many years.

Senator Church's resolution would provide protections for hospitals and medical personnel that are vital. At the same time, opponents of the abortion decision must be looking ahead. Difficult questions will inevitably be raised with respect to the exclusivity of policy in institutions and among health-care people that Senator Church's resolution would protect. Specifically, are religious and ethical policies to be applied the same in areas where Catholic hospitals are the only ones for miles around, as they would be in populous areas where broader choices prevail for those seeking an abortion or sterilization? And if they are to be so applied, are Catholics then open to charges of imposing a moral ethic on the society of a particular geographical area? Further, is it reasonable to abolish all maternity and obstetrical services in Catholic hospitals in order to counter the possibility of abortions being performed there, as is under consideration in the Diocese of Great Falls, Montana? These are the kinds of questions that will be raised. Answers will be needed soon—and they must be more nuanced than those thus far forthcoming.

NEW CARDINALS

So we have some new Cardinals. The *New York Times* even put a picture of their installation by Pope Paul on the front page. Unless we miss our guess, though, a lot of the pizazz has gone out of ecclesiastical pomp and ceremony like this. Let's face it, Rome—people don't care too much about the rich ceremonials that presumably raised a little gooseflesh back in the good old days.

Not that we are in favor of abolishing all that is old—far from it. And despite what conservative critics of liberals always say, we don't believe in change for the sake of change, as the accusatory cliché has it. But we do favor recognizing when an institution has outlived its best days, and we think the College of Cardinals, though it has a fairly long history, is either in that category or is fast approaching it.

Theoretically the Cardinals function as regular advisers to the Pope. Few do, however, except for a certain number of Roman Cardinals who are close at hand and who are usually old friends anyway. These days the chief function of the College of Cardinals as a whole is to elect a new Pope when the old one dies, and there's the rub. Men who are almost always appointed by one Pope, and who are by the very nature of things almost always quite aged, meet and pick one of their number to be the next Pontiff. This procedure is too confining entirely, even though the Pope has ruled that those 28 Cardinals who are over 80 will be barred from voting the next time round—to the reported great indignation of some of them.

Pope Paul is not unconscious that there are flaws in the present system, and at the installation of the new Cardinals he took the opportunity to describe some of the moves toward reform that he plans. Basically what he wants to do is to broaden the base of electors, and in this he is surely right. Specifically, all that he proposes, however, is to include those Eastern Rite patriarchs who are not Cardinals and those bishop-members of the standing committee of the Bishops' Synod who also are not Cardinals, seven out of 15 members. These proposals are a good start in the right direction, and welcome, but they do not seem to us a large enough step. For our part, we agree with those who would like to see the Bishops' Synod as a whole play a vastly expanded role in the election of the Pope—and indeed in the whole government of the Church. The Synod, after all, was created by Vatican II to aid and advise the Pope, and it represents the major structural reform made by the Council. Ultimately, we would like to see all the People of God represented in the selection of the Pope, and the immediate participation in that process by bishops chosen by their fellow-bishops would be a good beginning.

Pope Paul's remarks on the reforms he envisages are precisely that—remarks; no changes in procedure on the papal elections take effect until and unless he officially promulgates them. Before he does so, therefore, we hope he will consider broadening the electoral procedure further than he has so far indicated. This is, we think, a necessary and healthy reform. And we would emphasize one point: change in the electoral procedure should be done as speedily as possible, for reform that is too long delayed—like lay participation—will find that few still care when it eventually does come.

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Will Congress Buy The Standby Draft?

Congressman Spark Matsunaga (D-Hawaii) recently introduced a House Joint Resolution calling for repeal of the Armed Forces Selective Service Act, with co-sponsorship by Congressmen Perrin Mitchell (D-Md.) and John F. Seiberling (D-Ohio). Senator Mark Hatfield had introduced similar legislation (S.J. Res. 54) in the Senate on February 7; co-sponsors of that bill included Senators Proxmire, Stevenson, Cranston, Abourezks and Gravel.

Although a lottery for 19-year-olds was held on March 8, many people, including Congressmen who will be voting on these resolutions, think that the Selective Service Act expires automatically on July 1. The Selective Service Act, however, is permanent legislation and can be ended only by a vote of both houses of Congress. Section 10(h) of the Military Selective Service Act, passed on September 28, 1971, describes the System as an active standby organization: "If at any time calls under this section for the induction of persons for training and service in the Armed Services are discontinued because the Armed Forces are placed on an all-volunteer basis . . . the Selective Service System, as it is constituted on the date of the enactment of this subsection shall, nevertheless, be maintained as an active standby organization with registration and classification, and personnel adequate to reinstate" the draft.

Former Secretary of Defense Laird announced just before leaving office in late January that the President had voluntarily ended his induction authority, although it will not expire officially until June 30, 1973. In the meantime, the Administration has asked for $55 million to continue the draft on a standby basis after that date. This means that young men (and women?) would still have to register at 18 and report for physicals—an expensive operation that some legislators argue is a total waste of money. Acting Selective Service Director Pepitone presented the Administration's position before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations on the same day that Congressman Matsunaga introduced his bill.

In a conference held at the Capitol Hill Methodist church the same week, local and regional members of the National Council to Repeal the Draft heard some of the difficulties facing them in the months ahead. Hearings on the draft have already been delayed as a result of the continuing incapacity of Senator John Stennis, Chairman of the powerful Armed Service Committee. As of this moment, there are no Republican co-sponsors for repeal legislation, in spite of the pledge of the President five years ago "to eliminate Selective Service completely."

There were hopeful signs, as well. Among these were the fact that significant gains had been made by the repeal forces over the past six years, including an increase of 21 Senators and 49 Representatives in 1971, over the vote in 1967. Support for repeal includes such disparate groups as the YAF, most of the major religious bodies, the YWCA, ACLU, and most recently the ADA—Senator Goldwater, as well as Senator McGovern. And although some experienced anti-draft people are convinced the President may introduce new legislation to retain his induction authority, he has not done so yet.

Congressman Matsunaga gave two strong arguments, one economic, one political, why "the Military Selective Service Act must be repealed and the System dismantled" in his address to the national gathering of the repeal forces: "The $55 million requested for Selective Service next year could be put to thousands of preferable alternative uses. For instance, $55 million could fund nearly 2,000 units of low and moderate-income housing. . . . If the Office of Management and Budget is *really* looking for programs to terminate, Selective Service should have been one of its earliest targets."

Repealing the draft, he continued, "would make access to unlimited manpower through draftees that much more difficult for the Executive in the future. Few doubt that the draft was one of the principal reasons why Presidents over the past decade saw no reason to seek Congressional sanction for the actions in Vietnam. The theory was: Draft the boys, send them overseas, and Congress won't dare abandon them in the field." According to the Constitution, Congress, not the President, carries the responsibility for commitment of troops on any long-term basis. "If only to redress this current Constitutional imbalance," Matsunaga said, "the Military Selective Service act should be repealed."

While federal funds for economic aid to poverty groups are being slashed, the budget for standby draft machinery remains high. The Black Caucus, traditional and strong advocates of repeal, will undoubtedly emphasize this point.

At the moment, however, unless there is a concerted effort and visible public support for repeal, it looks as if the inequitable, unworkable and (according to tradition) un-American draft will continue into its fourth decade. Up to this point, the silence on the issue in newspapers, journals and on television, has been—in Matsunaga's word—"deafening."

The Nixon Administration expects the public to pay a high price for a standby draft. Within the next few months, Congress will decide if they intend to buy it.

MICHAEL TRUE

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NOTES FOR A NEW DEMOCRATIC REALISM

MICHAEL NOVAK

Americans do not live within one sense of reality merely. Inside each of our "yellow submarines," looking out, everything looks different. Words have different meanings and reverberations.

—Pauline Kael has recently written that she knows of only one person in her cultural circle who voted for Nixon. That's an authentic and valid world, a social fact of our time. But it is not the only cultural world in America.

—Shana Alexander recently wrote a haunting tribute to her parents on their fiftieth wedding anniversary. She spoke of "our generation"—she meant people in their 40's and 50's —as perhaps the last to have believed in marriage. Its ranks now riddled with divorces, it is unable so to "believe." She could think of only two "happy" marriages among those she knows of. In journalism and among media people, as in show business, there is a devastating way of life, in which what she says does seem all too true.

Divorces spill over, too, into the world of corporate, mobile, over $20,000-a-year life: the Loud family in Santa Barbara renders the type. In every cultural world, in every era, some marriages fail. Yet, among couples I know in their thirties, forties and fifties, among relatives, friends and associates, despite some divorces, I easily count dozens and dozens of stable marriages (stable, sometimes, on the second try).

Stormy at times, tense—like that of Ms. Alexander's parents—such marriages are founded on an ancient realism. "Happy" is not quite the word. No one said human life is meant to be happy. But mutually supportive, and at least a shade more creative than destructive; yes, I know scores and scores of such marriages. Ms. Alexander lives in a different cultural world from the ones I know.

—Any realistic politics must begin to take explicit account of all the many cultural worlds in this vast, diverse land. It is a hopeful sign that among Democrats, America's diversity is beginning to be recognized.

—One development I do find disturbing, but altogether natural: A split is beginning to emerge between intellectuals of the "new politics" and intellectuals of the sort who "side" with the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. A certain amount of tension, conflict, argument and competitive organizing will be healthy and clarifying. Who can pretend to have all the wisdom in any one approach?

It is instructive that if McGovern took a drubbing in 1972, so did Jackson, Humphrey and Muskie.

—Politics is often ironic, so that what looks like a "fringe" idea sometimes "works" with swift and thorough unexpectedness. What looks like an "incremental, realistic, modest possibility" often dies stillborn. Alternatively, what starts out as "witness" or "education" sometimes turns out to kill tender shoots prematurely or to discredit them so that good things emerge decades later than necessary.

—Intellectuals, like social classes or neighborhoods, live in separate cultural worlds. In order to see why two or three groups are arguing so furiously over positions that seem to an outsider so close to one another, one sometimes has to know the whole personal or group history of those involved. The argument is often one part substantive, and two or three parts a matter of tone, style, emphasis, past disagreement, or even personal animosity. Intellectuals are a lot like Senators.

To get to the bottom of political disagreements among the educated one needs to know personal relationships, the connotations and symbolic status of key words or even programs, and the concrete interests with which each group implicitly identifies. (Usually these interests are not so crass as the opposition thinks, nor so noble as their agents think.)

No less is needed to understand conflicts between the many cultural worlds of the uneducated. Politics is to a surprising degree a matter of words. Words are the tools for defining problems, loyalties, passions, constituencies and actions. Often words mislead both their users and their hearers. The many languages of the uneducated are often crude and mean, but if one spends time sympathetically with those who use them, one often discovers more room for agreement than initial slogans suggested.

—Michael Harrington's book *Socialism* is an exercise in socialist revisionism. It is also revisionist regarding the meaning of American history. Symbolically, would the book have had a different reverberation had it been called *Americanism*?

Ho Chi Minh gave socialism a nationalistic, uniquely Vietnamese, villaged-based vocabulary. A neighborhood-based vocabulary for socialism in America might require creativity at least as great as Ho Chi Minh's. As matters stand, "socialism" is as dubious a symbol for most Americans as it once was for the villagers of North Vietnam.

When a Pole in Pittsburgh hears "socialism" he thinks of Russian tanks and state bureaucracy in Poland, not of the early humanism of Karl Marx. That does not mean he thinks Homestead Steel is fair or just, or that he has high esteem for politicians in power, or that he thinks this nation is fair to him.

There is a special office in the Vatican for papal Latin. Perfectly

(Continued on page 70)

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NIXON'S VIETNAM STRATEGY

GABRIEL KOLKO

Constant goals, but shifting means for attaining them

If one reviews the long history of the Indochina war and the accuracy of those who speculated on its future, the pessimists regarding United States intentions were far more realistic than those who anticipated a durable peace. And because there is still no evidence that the Nixon Administration has abandoned the decades-old political and economic goals in Southeast Asia, much less its larger vision of itself as the inhibiter of social transformation in the Third World, pessimism is still appropriate today. All that one can state regarding Washington's present intentions is that the means to attain its traditional objectives have partially altered along with the context in which it must apply them. Dangers to the peace not only remain omnipresent but so too does the grave threat to full justice and self-determination for the Vietnamese people and their revolution against colonialism which began over a quarter-century ago.

While the goals of U.S. strategies in Indochina have remained constant, this has never been true of the means for attaining them. The tactics employed at any given time depended less on rational calculations than the successive failures of the techniques Washington chose to employ, forcing it to adopt yet one more dead-end. The virtually exclusive dependence on American men and firepower from 1966 through 1969 was partially replaced by a "Vietnamization" program whereby the U.S. hoped that they could make Vietnamese fight Vietnamese and attain a degree of success the NLF's strength had denied Americans. Yet these were never exclusive options, and even as they were applied in a unison that led only to successive military, political and economic failures in Indochina and at home, Washington studied a large variety of quite distinctive alternatives. With the failure of the Cambodia and Laos invasions and the ineffectuality of "Vietnamization," approaches to the war that were contemplated even before 1970 gained added plausibility as the main pillars of Washington's war policy crumbled.

Even before Nixon assumed the Presidency he at times believed that a military victory in Vietnam was unattainable, and that if he were to achieve success there it would have to be as part of a global diplomatic *quid pro quo* in which he won Soviet and possibly Chinese cooperation to gain diplomatically what was always to elude the U.S. militarily. The tensions between the two great allies of the Vietnamese were to provide the leverage, exchanges for their strategic and economic interests elsewhere the bait. It is less important here that this strategy was, and is, incapable of implementation than that it was, like other bankrupt efforts, considered and, increasingly over time, attempted. Until 1971, in any case, it was not the keystone of U.S. plans. Bombs and puppets comprised the main thrust. But as all else failed, yesterday's improbabilities became today's last American hope.

Alternatives, including some long since relegated to wastebaskets, were formulated. They were both political and economic in nature, and eventually different threads of thought as well as specific plans were meshed and at least partially incorporated into present U.S. policy.

In January 1971, Washington planners were ready to coordinate these political and economic strategies, and the State Department, after canvassing other action-

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academics with Vietnamese experience, authorized Columbia's School of International Affairs to explore arrangements whereby the UN or various international bodies would initiate a "multilateral" approach to "rehabilitation and development in Vietnam," hopefully with "Communist (including North Vietnamese) participation. . . ." The project assumed no clear political settlement, nor even an end to all hostilities. Embodying the main premises of earlier planners, the project was headed by Ruth Russell, a former State Department officer.

Even in May 1971, when Dr. Russell embarked on the project, she privately revealed that the assumption was that the U.S. was a defeated nation seeking to impose economic terms and conditions on the victors. Her colleague at the School, former ambassador to Laos Charles W. Yost, was at the very same time urging that "A U.S. offer of economic aid to reconstruction might be tied to some internationally accepted settlement." Yost, who had just retired as Nixon's ambassador to the UN, surely reflected the Administration's thoughts more closely than did the Columbia project. Through the fall, as they briefed the State Department and looked at the facts, their doubts grew. At the end of January 1972, the Administration revealed that Kissinger in secret talks had already mentioned an "illustrative" $7.5 billion postwar reconstruction scheme, with North Vietnam perhaps getting one-third of it—implicitly if the peace settlement conformed to U.S. desires. Yet when the State Department obtained the Columbia report in March 1972, the loyal but candid advisers reported that Saigon's stability and the future of its economy remained "an open question," while the "Vietnamization" policy made genuine multilateral participation in reconstruction "difficult, if not impossible."

This is not the first or the last time that the Nixon Administration initiated a policy its experts warned would fail. Yet by last May the sheer ingenuity of linking American economic power, détente with Russia and China, and the survival of the Thieu regime, apparently appealed sufficiently to an Administration gambling on yet another policy to redeem its past failures and to attain its immutable goals.

By early last October senior U.S. generals in the war baldly stated that they were banking on frictions between China and Russia, as well as U.S. enticements to them, to affect the material balance. Neither experience, the advice of its own experts, nor repeated Sino-Soviet statements of solidarity with Vietnam could dissuade an Administration once more deluding itself as to what it might yet attain in Indochina. On January 10 the new Pentagon Secretary, Elliot L. Richardson, told Congress that even if "Vietnamization" were successful, the U.S. would not remain satisfied until "stability"—which implied the retention of the political status quo—as well as peace were attained in the region. And that, Melvin Laird and Kissinger made explicit the following days, meant Sino-Soviet "restraint," revealing once more that Nixon's dreams were returning to complicated schemes and tenuous great-power arrangements that bore no relationship to the dynamics of the Indochinese people's revolution.

The Nixon Administration has always been quite realistic about the military and political weakness of Thieu's regime. But instead of accepting the logical policy implications of this irreversible fact it has merely tried to compensate for it with American airpower and, increasingly, formulas designed to reduce the level of violence and increasingly shift the war down channels involving the simultaneous application of economic pressures, police power, political manipulation and grand

diplomacy. Yet the main facts regarding Saigon's military aptitudes have never been in doubt.

By the end of 1971, U.S. military advisers in the field grew increasingly pessimistic about the capacity of Thieu's forces to hold territory, much less develop the ability to use the modern equipment then pouring into its hands in the wake of American troop reductions. American airpower alone, it was comprehended, stood between Thieu's men and defeat.

This pessimistic assessment was too generous, and senior U.S. officers were surprised last spring when Thieu's elite units collapsed in the field, large numbers of regular army and militia forces deserted or switched sides, and Saigon air units refused to fly dangerous assignments. By mid-June the Americans admitted the loss of 68,000 of Thieu's best troops killed and wounded, but the figures were really much higher and had still to grow. It was simply an unequal match, and privately all American officials confessed that it was their airpower alone that prevented a total Liberation Army victory.

Ironically, it is this very weakness of Thieu's military, political and economic order that has, and will, compel the U.S. to continue to rely on other means—and its airpower above all—to prevent the total military collapse which Washington fears as so dangerous to its immutable goal of defining the future nature of Indochinese societies. Thieu's final demise would remove

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the politically rather than militarily critical intermediary by which the U.S. has managed to advance its ends, as best it can, in the region. In this sense, Thieu binds the U.S. more closely as he becomes weaker, for neither can survive in Vietnam without the other.

Given the January 27 Agreements, the Nixon Administration has designed an array of techniques for interfering directly in South Vietnam's internal affairs, including retention of its capacity to reemploy massive airpower. All of this will cost billions of dollars, but worse yet are the dangers it poses to a fragile peace in which the natural life of its dependent regime always hangs by a thread even if the ceasefire accords are maintained. Yet that threat of new military intervention, as well as simultaneous political and economic adventures within South Vietnam, is the inexorable logic of Nixon's support for an artificial regime in Saigon.

The two major means of direct U.S. intervention now known to us consist of the use of assorted "civilian advisers" programs as well as the maintenance of a vast number of men, ships and bases in the region. The civilian adviser project was initially a response to American troop reductions and the failure of the Saigon army to prepare its own manpower to use or maintain the deluge of advanced equipment, and Pentagon officials conceded they were "substituting the contractors for the blue-suiters" in purely combat-related functions. These advisers, however, were by priority to be foreign civilians if possible, even though it appears the bulk of them will be American citizens, many of them fresh out of the military, contracted by U.S. corporations. The program went publicly unnoticed when Congress released the Pentagon's testimony last September 8, but over the next two months new dimensions were revealed. The U.S. would send about 10,000 men, costing $150 million a year, to Vietnam for *at least* two years or as long as it took Saigon to become technically self-sufficient. Five thousand had arrived by early December.

Then there are smaller groups of Americans to remain. Next in size are about 1000 AID employees, including 160 working with the police—all scheduled to remain indefinitely without, according to Kissinger, any limits on their numbers. Consulates-general will open in four major cities to replace existing U.S. regional military headquarters, with an indeterminate quantity of consulates in smaller towns—out of which an undisclosed number of State Department and CIA personnel are to operate. At the beginning of December the State Department notified 100 Foreign Service officers to be prepared to go to Vietnam to man them. Then, embarrassed but unwilling to go on record for fear of later being accused of lying, the Pentagon tried to dismiss these facts as misunderstood.

Yet the most potentially dangerous U.S. involvement is in the personnel and airpower scheduled to remain in the region around Indochina. Kissinger on October 26 made it clear that any cease-fire accord would not affect the U.S. plans to keep these forces poised in the area. Pentagon sources now admit to 54,000 men in Thailand, 60,000 aboard 7th Fleet ships off Vietnam, 18,400 at critical Philippines service and supply bases, 14,000 in Guam with the B-52s, 6,000 on Taiwan in war-related service, and about 25,000 in the Hawaii bases charged with command and intelligence efforts—for a total of 177,000. To these we must add the service and reserve forces among the 75,000 U.S. personnel in Okinawa and Japan, and, no less important, the possibly tens of thousands of men sent to Thailand and Vietnam throughout 1972 as anonymous and uncounted "temporary duty" forces.

For the 60 days after the truce the existing incredible potential for destruction will be poised for combat. It is less important that the Pentagon claims it will thereafter reduce this number than that it has told the *New York Times,* in the journal's words, it will keep "airpower in the region for at least a few years." This material and psychological readiness to intervene once more in the war, perhaps years from now, raises the question of what U.S. policy will be should the January 27 Agreement break down—as Thieu both in words and deed has virtually guaranteed, and as the U.S. fully expects it will.

The Administration has yet to define the precise terms and conditions that will cause it to engage its airpower once again in the war, but it has explicitly failed to exclude that option, and so long as this is the case, and it retains the capability of re-entering the war, the danger that it will eventually do so is very great. And so long as the Thieu regime has the capacity to define the fate of the Agreements with Nixon's tacit consent, we must anticipate the worst.

U.S. and the Thieu Regime

The relationship between the Nixon Administration's role in Vietnam and the Thieu regime is symbiotic—neither can exist without the other. And for Thieu the destruction of the terms and spirit of the January 27 Agreements is the necessary precondition for his very survival. These realities are a virtual guarantee of continued crises and instability in Vietnam—and dangers to a most precarious peace.

The U.S. still expects the main pillar of the Thieu regime's strength to be its military power and its capacity to repress its internal opposition, policies which by necessity lead to protracted American involvement at every level so long as the Thieu regime can neither operate its vast arsenal of arms nor sustain an economy able to afford these repressive efforts. The traps before the U.S.' erstwhile desire to be out of the war are inherent in its policy of supporting a regime that

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has no basis of legitimacy among its own population nor the capacity to survive without U.S. military intervention. Defense Secretary Richardson has publicly admitted that only American economic and material aid keeps the Thieu regime alive, and for this very reason Thieu's policies are wholly constrained, in the last instance, by Washington's desires.

Beginning last October, Washington rushed an immense quantity of military equipment to Saigon valued in the billions of dollars, including over 400 new planes that have brought Thieu's air force up to 2,000 planes and helicopters and made it the third largest in the world. Even as it did so it had the audacity to demand that the socialist allies of the Vietnamese exercise "restraint" in assisting their comrades. Indeed, American officials now consider Saigon over-equipped and therefore in need of foreign advisers and technicians.

Thieu's actions to destroy the Agreements are entirely predictable. "We have to kill the Communists to the last man before we have peace," he publicly declared last October. Thieu did everything within his power to prevent the signing of the cease-fire Agreement, just as he has since done everything to prevent its implementation. It is not necessary here to dwell on these topics of the daily news, but it is essential to stress the fact that Thieu's actions are perfectly consistent with the narrower U.S. desire to have only a cease-fire on large-scale warfare and exchange POWs, using the time gained thereby to implement its other strategies of internal repression, a transitional partition, and an application of grand economic and conventional diplomacy along with the threats of new escalation with airpower.

It is not simply that Thieu has called for the resumption of U.S. bombing should the cease-fire break down, a reality he can define himself, much less that he desires an invasion of North Vietnam, but that Richardson, Kissinger and other responsible American officials have stated it is "impossible and undesirable" to exclude such intervention, and that Nixon himself at the end of January declared that the U.S. recognizes Thieu alone as the legitimate government. By so doing, Nixon as much as declared that Thieu has his support even if there are no serious talks leading to elections and the formation of a new government, and it has encouraged him to initiate wholesale violations of the terms of the Agreements. When on January 25 Thieu declared total political warfare, "which may last six months, one year or two years," everything that subsequently occurred had American sanction. This is why Washington dismissed the thousands of cease-fire violations which even American reporters largely attribute to Thieu's army.

No sooner had the Agreements been initiated than Thieu warned the Vietnamese people, under pain of possible death, not to make statements or exhibit any form of support for the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), neutralists, or any position opposed to Thieu, not to move from where they reside at the time, or violate the draconian martial law now in full force. U.S. officials admitted that they had known months in advance about these steps, which wholly violate the most explicit terms of the Agreements they were even then preparing to sign. Without illusion, the Nixon Administration was giving full material and moral support to the effort to thwart the dynamics of reconciliation and peace among the Vietnamese people, thereby laying the basis for an eventual resumption of the war and its own direct return should Thieu's quite predictable military demise warrant it.

Multilateral Aid Scheme

For Washington, however, strict conformity to the Agreements means defeat, and so it has encouraged Thieu's violations with promises of support of every sort. Hence it is essential to examine precisely how, by means of "multilateral" economic schemes and diplomatic quid pro quos, the U.S. hopes it can consolidate Thieu's power and at the same time prevent the return of full-scale combat. And in this chimerical illusion rests the invitation to yet another potentially bloody disaster of direct American intervention into the affairs of Indochina.

It is a measure of the bankruptcy of the U.S. Vietnam policy that it is now seeking to create the most contrived "linkages" by which to leave intact a pro-American regime in at least part of South Vietnam. For the failure of its own military power and the "Vietnamization" policy, the Nixon Administration apparently hopes, it can compensate by some agreement with Russia and China, a "multilateral" economic aid program which is designed to gain North Vietnamese cooperation in return for massive economic aid, and the consolidation of the Thieu regime via its non-compliance with the January 27 Agreements. Despite the fact that at least some American technicians have categorically called this combination impossible to attain, it is not remarkable that Nixon pursues this last vain hope. His option would be to allow the Agreements to be literally enforced, and that, along with the irresistible dynamics of the Vietnamese people's desire for peace, would mean the demise of the Thieu regime and U.S. influence in Indochina.

Massive infusions of economic aid in Saigon areas are essential to Nixon for yet another reason. There are many ways in which the Thieu regime can die, and economic collapse is one of the more imminent. The U.S. maintains every conceivable indicator on the health of the Saigon economy, from exchange rates and inflation to construction starts, and they have all been declining precipitously since last March. Despite

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repeated devaluations, the black-market rate for the piaster is at an all-time low as the small elite prepares to transport itself and its riches abroad. Moreover, massive direct aid to Thieu, whose reputation for corruption is today as great as his practice, is a program Nixon fears Congress is not likely to approve with alacrity. Hence, for a whole spectrum of reasons, the Administration is currently stressing "multilateralism" in postwar reconstruction, making it contingent on the erstwhile peace.

The Administration has alluded to a $7.5 billion, five-year "multilateral" program with increasing frequency since October. This it considers, as Secretary of State Rogers phrased it last November 5, as "incentives for the political solution to be worked out among the Vietnamese." "It must all be part of one pattern," Nixon himself declared on January 31 in an obvious effort to overcome Congressional reticence toward the idea.

From the inception, however, it has been clear that the sums involved, and even the commitment to the principle, are far more ambiguous than the political conditions Washington would like to impose. The exact amount, Nixon declared obliquely, "will come out." Therefore Kissinger's trip to Hanoi, which appears only to have laid the groundwork for the strategy without confirming its viability.

This baldly naked effort at bribery again reveals the profound dissociation between the Administration's perceptions and the reality, a myopia that caused it to blitz North Vietnam and Indochina for four years in the hope it might gain its terms. North Vietnam, and even U.S. experts who know it best, has made it patently clear that there simply can be no subordination of the political settlement to possible reconstruction aid. The Nixon Administration has learned absolutely nothing if it believes a national revolutionary independence movement that has fought and sacrificed immeasurably for over 25 years will now abandon questions of fundamental principle that would leave the Thieu regime in office and allow the nation's wealth to be exploited by its worst oppressors. Yet, strangely, this utter cynicism appears precisely to be the Administration's latest self-delusion.

This attitude is all the more curious because Washington knows that the PRG and North Vietnam have major aid options not merely among the Communist states but also France, Sweden and numerous other Western official and private sources. No less important is the fact that virtually no nation of economic consequence has yet indicated a willingness to cooperate with a U.S.-style "multilateralism" which would merely be a guise for political blackmail.

The January 27 Agreement was a profoundly necessary but by no means sufficient condition for a final *political* settlement of a war that will end only when the Vietnamese attain complete social justice and independence from foreign domination. Careful inquiry into existing plans and the long history of past American deception proves that Washington is still a long way from true withdrawal from the war, and the bitter first weeks after January 27 only confirm our worst fears. But while Nixon's present policy is dangerous, it is also doomed to failure. This, too, is nothing new.

For like the whole of American strategy since 1950, Nixon's latest tactic is an improvised and incoherent response to reality, one that reveals only the will to persist in meddling in the affairs of Indochina. By virtue of that fact it warrants great anxiety, for U.S. military escalation has always been the consequence of its political-diplomatic failures as well as the fatal weaknesses of its dependent regimes, and with the U.S. air armada nearby, and Thieu so profoundly isolated and weak, we cannot discount this option until all U.S. forces withdraw from Southeast Asia. When the present American diplomatic effort exhausts itself, as inevitably it must in its own contradictions and false premises, leaving nothing between Thieu and the PRG save American airpower, only then will we know whether the long generation of terrible suffering has truly ended for Vietnam. Yet at this moment, the trap waiting to ensnare American policy remains one of its own making—its sustained support for the Thieu regime.

Until the U.S. ceases to maintain a puppet state, the war has not finally ended but has instead passed into an unpredictable limbo from which only violence, repression, and eventually war can emerge. In many respects it will resemble the situation confronting Washington in 1965, with the determining factor being the intensity of Nixon's tenacity to a decades-old American goal of preserving a pro-American regime.

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NINA SANDRICH

OF ICE AND AGE

Night nudges daylight to depart
and winter air lies chill and thin
upon this hill which shapes the space
of longing. This is not a place
for dreams or dalliance, rather crystal
images of chill transparent
specters tinged with snow and frost
spill shadows as they whisper past.
And all the little stars are cold
that shine so faintly, far from reach,
since earth itself is shivering
and ancient; even wind is old
this hour for it parts the clouds
to show where pale-faced Isis stands,
impassive in imperfect light,
a half-moon frozen in her horns,
her wide eyes white with ice and age.

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THE LOUDS OF SANTA BARBARA

MICHAEL MURRAY

Seven months in the life of 'An American Family'

Over the past few weeks I have seen 10 of the 12 episodes of *An American Family,* the now renowned series on the Public Broadcasting Service which shows segments from seven months in the life of the William C. Loud family of Santa Barbara, California. Trying to write about it, however, is like reviewing a novel in which the characters spin on after the last page, popping up in the *Daily News* or on the Dick Cavett Show to demonstrate new attitudes, new characterizations and new hairstyles. Once thought safely in the film can, an anthropological exhibit for Margaret Mead (". . . as important for our time as were the invention of drama and the novel for earlier generations . . ."), a novelistic exhibit for novelist Anne Roiphe in the *New York Times Magazine* ("Maybe he [Kevin] will be a good salesman, but he seems so much like thin air right now one fears he's just going to disappear. A strong woman will marry him, perhaps . . ."), and a general disaster for the *Village Voice* after one episode ("If this were a sane civilization it would be a ridiculous show") these characters are now unaccountably raging through the media, squawking about their own authentic existence, their dismay at being put into pigeonholes, and their determination to keep moving, stumbling and bouncing around in the future, with or without permission from filmmakers and critics. Pirandello would be pleased.

Because it is a pioneering effort, there is something inherently peculiar about the series without doubt. Everyone must be aware by now that during the recording of more than 300 hours of family life on film and tape the Louds' marriage came apart and the oldest son came to public terms with his homosexuality. The other members of the family may have gone through less visible traumas. Why, everyone asks, did they let themselves in for it? What was the role of the camera and the filmmakers? When two people on film settle down for a supposedly private and personal conversation, whom do they think they are kidding? The publicity releases describe the technique as a television version of Oscar Lewis' painstaking researches into Mexican life, but in fact how authentic a document is this?

The Louds themselves say that everything was truthful until the filmmakers boiled down 300 hours of relatively *vérité* footage to 12 hours of sensationalized social criticism, heralded in the newspapers by lip-smacking advertisements. They claim that the happy and constructive hours of family life were left out in favor of admittedly grim events. They have recently described (on the Cavett show) how the project came about: that they committed themselves to only a few hours at first, then to a few more, and so on, expecting initially to be involved only in surface glimpses of a nice, middle-class "lifestyle," but ending up months later spilling out on camera many of their deepest resentments and painfully exposing their most hidden weaknesses.

It is an indication of their lack of self-awareness, or of their motivation, that they reviewed most of the finished episodes and did not see anything wrong until the shows were broadcast and they read in the papers about how wretched their lives were. Even now they don't entirely regret the experience, and all but Pat would do it again. They have fulfilled some kind of American dream, for good or ill—they have lived their lives on television, and *are still doing it.*

Life on TV

What is it like to live on television? Bill Loud tells of how, while shaving in the morning (the camera was discreetly waiting at the breakfast table), he thought he had better start saying some intelligent things and considered hunting through Plato and *Forbes Magazine* for suitable remarks. His daughter Delilah mentions the stickiness of the situation on many afternoons when she was sitting around with friends while the camera was grinding in her direction—and she could think of nothing to say! In many of the episodes one can see from her, and from all of them, the growing compulsion to speak, to be interesting, to dredge up anything —jokes, whistles, noises—to fill the void.

One can imagine that these efforts, in conjunction with the sheer physical pressure of cameras and lights (exactly the old third-degree effect) would start to fish out more and more truth from behind the weakened defenses. A person would have to start thinking more and more about his life and the image he was projecting. (a) Is it really me? (b) (Worse) Is it boring? By Episode Six, Bill and Pat are beginning to have open fights; it is as if they have run out of day-to-day material and

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are now reaching down to a whole new vein, not sure how it's going to turn out because they've never tapped it before, on screen or off. The depths of their feelings may surprise them, but at least there is no shortage of drama. In the midst of a fight at a noisy fiesta celebration in a night club—mostly a monologue of intensely ugly and banal vituperation from Pat, spoken with deadly calm—Bill seems to glance toward the camera, as if to say, "Are you getting this? This is the mess I'm in." A subsequent episode shows Pat pouring out the whole tragic story of her marriage—her husband's infidelities, her children's failures, her own bewilderment. This confession, racking and desolate, is presumably for her brother, but it is really for the camera; it says, "This is the mess *I'm* in."

They are unhappy, now that it's over, because they feel their personal message did not get across. Their very lives have been judged—by *television critics*, of all people—and been compared, in terms of character and plot development, to *The Forsyte Saga* or *Wednesday Night at the Movies*. It has been taken as a specimen by popular sociologists as if their lives were forever frozen in a sort of Dead Sea Scroll, a storehouse of depersonalized revelations about the mores of mid-century America. And so naturally the Louds must now keep the story going, amplifying, explaining, filling in—changing. From now on their lives belong at least partly to the media.

What makes the story so alive is that it has not been communicated as strictly a narrative or as a documentary report but rather as a unique form of video *vérité*, powerful because it is basically *allusive*, like a poem. The show's producer, Craig Gilbert, was shrewd or lucky in choosing this particular family, not only because all the strands of family drama did come together in a relatively short time, but also because, at the time of the film, the Louds are so thoroughly out of touch with their feelings and so desperately tongue-tied in their relations with one another that they are perfect for television. They permit the viewer to supply the motivations, the interpretations, even the emotions of the scenes, without muddying the waters with any reflections of their own. This kind of television is the "new novel" at its best, presenting a catalogue of props, furnishings and behavior without explanation, showing faces without expression, but all within a context which leads the viewer to do the work. Pat Loud visits her home town, Eugene, Oregon; she pokes around outside the house where she lived as a young mother; nobody is home and she peers in the windows, shielding her eyes with her hand; we watch her for a long time. our feelings say: "The lost past! Innocence! How happy we were!"; but her face is blank, the dark glasses impenetrable; in fact she may just be looking at the new wallpaper.

For this effect to work, there must be a context. We are not interested in appearances *per se*. People at a bus stop don't catch our attention because we don't know anything about them; we can't interpret their glances and shuffles. Thus television *vérité* is ultimately as dependent on some kind of story as *Cannon* and *Columbo* are; the big chunks of simple "existence" that have been recorded for this series— Delilah's dance concert, Grant's summer job, endless meals eaten and drinks drunk—hold our interest (when they do) because they have interesting reverberations in terms of what we know about these people and their relationships.

The producers frankly went for this story; the editing focuses on the central event. In the first episode we are informed that Pat and Bill will separate during the course of the series. At once we are watching not just an American family, but an American family on the edge of disintegration. All the hellos and goodbyes, the energetic and totally guarded banter ("Hey! The Big D!" 'How's it goin', Big G?" etc.) are colored by what we know of the story. We scan all behavior for cracks in the pleasant armor. We wonder if Lance, the homosexual son, is an enormous crack or a bizarre subplot. The silences between husband and wife, the boring conversations about work, children and weather, are all examined for clues; the texture of these lives becomes rich with implications. If the family felt a growing necessity to reveal themselves, they needn't have worried.

The surfaces of life take on a new aspect in Episode Nine when Bill returns from a business trip to find that Pat has taken steps toward divorce. He is asked to move out, which he does, his jaunty manner finally betrayed here by ruined eyes. By this time we have been through several highly dramatic and direct encounters, but now the filmmakers again plunge us into the minutiae of the Loud household over the next few days—lunches, dinners, sunbathing, radio listening, haircombing. In the context of Bill's departure, however, these details now have the atmosphere of a moon landscape. The props and mannerisms we had studied earlier now seem arid, disjointed and weightless. The incessant background radio hums mood music: Montovani and "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" Communication among the survivors is at a standstill, and again it is the viewer who invests the scene with his own emotions, reacting personally to the poolside furniture, the family cat, and the icewater dispenser.

On the Wane

At this point, I think, the series starts to wane, several episodes before its time, because the story seems over, the family shattered. Later sequences show how Bill manages on his own, how the kids get along at school, and further unhappy developments in Lance's sad career. But the resonance is gone and the message becomes repetitious.

When it is working, though, *An American Family*

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has an unusual power. This family is thoroughly American. Pat and Bill have traveled from the security of America a few years ago—the extended family, the comfortable religion (they were baptized Catholics), the green backyard—to some strange territory where nothing is the same. All their relatives are in other cities, religion has been dropped, and fire is literally licking around the swimming pool. For Bill, money-making (as a manufacturer of equipment for strip-mining) is a desperate pursuit which is taken for granted or mocked by his children. For Pat, marriage has, by itself, failed to transform her into a mature and fulfilled person. The children drift, bemused by the absurdity of work, study and adult life in general.

Most significantly, none of these griefs is ever expressed directly. All fears, resentments and joys are buried instead in a genial patter or ignored in an intense preoccupation with guitars, fruit juice, Mexican food and foreign automobiles. Although Bill has apparently been philandering for some years, and Pat has known it, their crack-up surprises them because they haven't looked at themselves. Nor have they looked at their children: Grant's frank rejection of their values baffles them, and although Lance was mixed up, even at the age of fourteen to the point of dyeing his hair silver, they assure each other that he is "fine" and "just a slow starter."

The family in the film is touching because it is lost in a true-blue, red-blooded familiar American way, and because through the *vérité* technique all of us, the co-sufferers, think we can see through the real feelings; we sense subliminally, behind flickering eyelids, the desire to break out. Middle-class homecomings, for example, are always a disaster, as they are here, exuberant and embarrassing, with everyone under great pressure *not* to express joy too obviously because the protective routines of life have not yet had a chance to take over. For a few terrifying moments the whole family is out in the open, vulnerable.

Now, as the story moves on into the future, the real Louds are confronting the filmed Louds—on television. The younger members of the family give the appearance of having gained from the experience; they are resilient enough to make use of this alien view of themselves. Pat and Bill are less sure, less capable so far of making their various realities jibe. They are, of course, both authors and performers of this production; whatever the whole family looks like is their responsibility.

So, on the Cavett show for example, they try to fill in the gaps and reveal what the film ignored. As they talk, however, they are not only making points but they are also *being the Louds*. Bill and several of the children (the girls) have their old habit of pushing their tongues against their cheeks. We watch for signals between the parents—what is their relationship now? We react to the casual mention that Delilah has dropped her boyfriend, Brad. Our study of "lifestyle" goes on: Look how everyone got gussied up for TV!

Craig Gilbert, the producer, is there. He is now an essential part of the drama. Not only has the *New York Times* linked him with Pat, but now the whole family angrily wants to know why he took out one sequence and left in another. He stutters and stumbles. The audience is getting its first glimpse of this character who has been so much a part of the whole process.

Perhaps this type of feedback will widen out and accelerate. TV critics will become involved in broadcast debates with the Louds and will thus themselves become participants in the drama. Margaret Mead herself may be sucked in, explaining her anthropological interpretations to Pat and Bill on TV and then, as they react to her theories, becoming inexorably a part of what she is analyzing, forever an ingredient of the Loud saga.

In this way the Louds will win after all, as they deserve to. Theirs are not the only lives under inspection. Who they are and what they do implicates all of us in one way or another, and that is what makes them so fascinating.

LAURENCE J. SASSO, JR.

SURGERY

Hold, hold the elusive
chrome-dipped rod
while alien eyes probe
each warm and
hardened crevice.

Brown-eyed modesty,
razored yesterday, was
carried off with
tepid lather and coiled hair.

Look from exploding
blue-streaked skin
into the corona,
ceiling mounted.

You weren't here last week
and ribbons graced your
subtle blondeness;
dinners cooled while we kissed.

Feel hard, feel hard
in this terror.
Put no faith
in hypodermic sleep.

Tighten,
freeze the image
last in view.
Hold on with stubborn
nails. Tomorrow is
right here for you.

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THE SCREEN

The first film George Cukor directed on his own after his Hollywood apprenticeship was entitled *Tarnished Lady* (1932), which might also be a good description for every Cukor heroine since. From *Camille* (1938) to *A Star Is Born* (1954) and from *Little Women* (1933) to *The Chapman Report* (1962), he has dealt with quite a variety of unhappy women. He has coped with every stereotype of womanhood from dumb and shapely to shrewd and slinky—from Harlow and Holliday to Katharine Hepburn. But clearly the distaff roles that he has preferred are the ones that Ms. Hepburn could play. She embodies his ideal. This is the woman who is tough, witty and sometimes even acerbic; resourceful, intelligent, unflappable and worldly; striking rather than pretty, in shape instead of shapely, aggressively female but not sexy. Since 1932 Cukor has directed Ms. Hepburn in at least nine films I can think of, and the suitability of the character Aunt Augusta to be Ms. Hepburn's tenth starring role under him was undoubtedly behind Cukor's decision to direct the film version of Graham Greene's novel, *Travels with My Aunt*.

Unfortunately, however, it didn't work out. Ms. Hepburn's starring in the film didn't work out, that is. For Cukor everything worked out pretty well despite this setback. Why Ms. Hepburn withdrew just before shooting began was never entirely clear, but the result was that Cukor got to work with yet another gifted leading lady: Maggie Smith.. The only fault that can be found with Ms. Smith's performance is that she sometimes seems to be playing Katharine Hepburn rather than Aunt Augusta, but this has to be Cukor's own fault because he had Ms. Hepburn too clearly in mind for the part.

The curious thing about the films Cukor has made with Ms. Hepburn is that in the end she is usually bested by a man. Though Eve in *Adam's Rib* (1949) may have beaten Adam in the courtroom, Adam brings courtroom histrionics home with him to make a fool of her there. Though *The Philadelphia Story* (1949) may begin with Tracy throwing Dexter out of the house, it ends with his beguiling her back into marriage. This is curious because it doesn't happen to the heroine so consistently in films Cukor has made with other leading ladies, and because it suggests that even Cukor himself ultimately feels threatened by women as accomplished and capable as those Ms. Hepburn has played. The final comeuppance Ms. Hepburn usually seems to get from a man is perhaps just a way a movie industry dominated by men needed to reaffirm its authority over clever women.

At any rate, something similar happens in Cukor's version of *Travels*. Aunt Augusta drags nephew Henry (Alex McCowen) all over Europe while she cheats and steals to raise ransom for her kidnapped lover, Visconti (Robert Stephens). But in the end Visconti's abduction turns out to be a ruse, and in a complete departure from Greene's novel, Visconti turns out to be the one person capable of cheating and robbing Augusta.

The only trouble with this ending Cukor and his scriptwriters have introduced is that it seems to leave Cukor himself bewildered. He is used to respectable characters, not the bunch of crooks he has fallen in with here. What kind of victory is there in Visconti's being not only without honor and scruples, but also without love? The day is saved for male chauvinism when Henry and another lover of Augusta's outwit Visconti in return. But Cukor still finds life more confusing here than it was in even the most urbane movie made thirty or forty years ago. Moving further still from the novel, Cukor's film ends with Henry and Augusta tossing a coin to decide whether she should reform as he wants, or he should corrupt as she wants. Up the coin goes, and up it stays in a freeze-frame ending. That coin in mid-air is an image of absolute ambiguity, which is something new in Cukor movies.

I must confess that I see as few children's movies as possible. From the limited experiences I've had with them, they seem generally a form of adult propaganda on a par with the "Why We Fight" series, and a way of exploiting children second only to the Victorian slave trade in teenage girls. Moreover, if a film is animated, my apprehension is much increased. The reason is that quality animation, like the costume epic, is becoming extinct because it is too expensive. In work done for television, where most animators must now practice their trade, the only way to survive is to grind it out. Quantity is everything and quality nothing. An hour-long cartoon show for television contains little more animation that did the ten-minute Walter Lantz or Disney cartoon that used to be seen in theaters.

It was therefore not as a willing victim that I submitted to what I assumed would be the scant charms of *Charlotte's Web*, an animated film that has been made from E. B. White's classic for children. To my surprise, however, the film's animation isn't the usual stingy job. While the characters are never paraded before the sort of dazzlingly deep, multilayered backgrounds that used to grace the Disney animation benches, the film doesn't rely on cheap, skimpy backgrounds either. There is no floated-in background coloring, and no camera movement used to cover the absence of figure movement. Nor do the characters' movements have any primitive jerkiness or time-filling repetitiousness about them, though they do sometimes move in a rather creaky fashion.

The human characters are drawn as pretty styleless,

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Dick-and-Jane types, but then they are the blander, less important figures in White's story. The real stars are of course the animals—especially Wilbur (Henry Gibson), the pig who dreads being slaughtered in the fall, Charlotte (Debbie Reynolds), the spider who is major-domo of the barn cellar and saves Wilbur by spinning epithets into her web, and Templeton (Paul Lynde), the self-centered pack rat who scrounges the copy for Charlotte's web. The fatalistic wisdom of Charlotte comes across reasonably well in the voice of Ms. Reynolds. If there is a deficiency in Charlotte's portrayal, it is that she looks a bit too much like Debbie Reynolds rather than that she sounds like her. On the other hand the visual similarity that also seems to exist between Templeton and Mr. Lynde seems more appropriate. Templeton mouths his words with Lynde's own half-menacing, half-contemptuous curl of the lip. If, as seems the case, the animators did study Lynde's expressions with an eye toward better synchronizing his sound track and Templeton's face, it is only another indication of the care taken on the film.

At the end of White's book, after Charlotte has died, the author comments that it is a rare thing to have, as Wilbur did, "a true friend who is also a good writer." Though that remark is included in the film's narration, White's good writing is what is inevitably left out of the movie. To jazz the story up a bit, and compensate for the loss of White's style, the movie adds some musical numbers. I wouldn't say it was a fair exchange, but the musical numbers do have a certain whimsy of their own, particularly Templeton's solo "A Veritable Smorgasbord" and a routine done by a high-kicking chorus of chickens.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

SOLZHENITSYN, NEO-TOLSTOYAN

JOHN HEIDENRY

August 1914
ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN
Farrar, Straus, $10

Solzhenitsyn
DAVID BURG & GEORGE FEIFER
Stein and Day, $10

IN A YEAR-END review of books published in 1972 a well-respected critic has let it be known that of all volumes the world most eagerly awaited Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914,* but that upon publication, alas, the characters were found to have wind-up keys protruding out of their backs; and, thus curtly dismissing the first installment of the Nobel Prize-winner's life-work, he turns his attention to other things.

This is an extreme statement of a variety of attitude that has developed towards Solzhenitsyn in the West and partly it is an understandable reaction. Solzhenitsyn is clearly the greatest nineteenth-century writer now living—and whether he has also managed the feat of equally being the present time's is not to be decided here. The danger to sophisticated readers brought up on two or three generations of truly extraordinary literary innovation—Solzhenitsyn himself confesses to a paucity of knowledge of Western literature—from roughly, say, the Pound era in the time of his youth to, in Solzhenitsyn's advancing years, such experimentation as can be found in the astonishing work of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, is clearly one of reading his books with a patronizing attitude; as though we have heard it all before but allow this courageous primitive his old-fashioned morality and straightforward literary narrative. For, after all, as his admiring biographers David Burg and George Feifer point out, Solzhenitsyn's heroism does fit a faintly obsolescent mold—so much so that, as they also observe, almost a decade after *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* had been published, a Professor Ulanov of Yale University, a refugee from Russia, could argue that Solzhenitsyn does not exist at all, and that his books are written by a secret-police committee working to earn hard currency for the KGB by exploiting sensation-hungry Western readers.

But there is also the *de facto* situation that other works of Solzhenitsyn are acknowledged as masterpieces and only *August 1914* is singled out for public exasperation and, indeed, scorn. But if it is often the case that major writers undergo fallow periods or issue lesser books in their decline (and Solzhenitsyn is now in his middle fifties), this—depending on how you look at it—generous or contemptible excuse cannot really be made, at least in the present instance, of Solzhenitsyn; that is, of *August 1914.* For he has several times made it clear that this is the work for which all others were a preparation. Conceived in his youth, it is a project on which he has meditated in the intervening years and gathered documentation on insofar as his restricted circumstances allowed. In a Foreword he further says that *August 1914* "comprises only the first part, or fascicle, of a work of many parts. . . . [It] may take as long as twenty years, and probably I will not live to finish it."

As to the literary merit of *August 1914,* I would like to come to that later and consider just a little further, then, what it means not only to have a major nineteenth-century author, but a Rus-

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sian one at that, in our midst. For it is precisely to Tolstoy that Solzhenitsyn is most often compared—and no doubt as far back as early 1969 there were murmurs when word came that Solzhenitsyn was at work on a novel of epic length relating to events of the First World War. Surely it would be merely a grand-scale recasting of *War and Peace* with only the names changed to disguise the dead and the quick. A hundred years separated the two wars, but the armies, imperial courts, and all the other long-past elements of Russian *temps perdu* were more or less the same. (And indeed, as if to invite the comparison, Tolstoy himself appears in the first pages of the book, walking in his garden—doubtless propelled by a mechanical spring—and we see him approached by a young soldier who has come to ask Lev Nikolaevich his opinion on "the aim of man's life on earth.")

The heaviness of the word—the unadorned and styleless word whose only business is to relate a tale as directly as possible—is not so easily borne by those of us who, in terms of imagination and language, have arrived at new definitions of literature. No one would dare to define art conclusively, but in some ineffable way it must express a spirit of the times—indeed, announce it; at its sublimest, reveal man to himself; but precisely by routes which have not previously been taken by anyone else.

There is no deft way, so far as I can see, that one can discover Solzhenitsyn to be modern in that sense. He is not really concerned with the extension of man's literary imagination; and, as Burg and Feifer also retail, apparently he has suppressed his desire to write poetry in deference to Tolstoy's notion that the medium is too refined to serve any moral or social purpose. If a man has withstood and prevailed over cancer, Siberian exile, KGB harassment, ostracism among his peers, the break-up of a marriage, and nonpublication of his works in his own country, perhaps he can be given leave —despite the storybook and too familiar pattern of his trials and suffering —to shun the fine manners of literature and just sit down to the table to eat. "The conviction carried by a genuine work of art," he declared in his 1970 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, "is absolutely indisputable, and tames even the strongly opposed heart." I do not wish to be misunderstood—one kind of literature does not exclude the other. Solzhenitsyn perceives the role of the artist not so much in a nineteenth-century as in a mode no longer fashionable or even conceivable. America in particular, in its entire history, has never had a writer that could be regarded as a great hero or prophet, even in the last century (although President Lincoln had an uncommonly good prose style); and in Europe one must look to the philosophers or even musicians, such as Wagner. It still seems to be a viable course for an artist to take if he has the power of craft, if you wish, to mold the soul of his people.

So many questions could be raised, and digressions taken, especially in relation to American writing and politics, but there is little room for that here. Solzhenitsyn's own views can be found in "Art—For Man's Sake," the Nobel lecture already alluded to; and from which a final quotation may be taken to provide a clue as to why he writes like the neo-Tolstoyan that he is (despite his many differences with that literary and national ancestor): "Whole countries and continents repeat each other's mistakes after a time, as it can happen even now, in an age when, as it would seem, everything is clearly visible. But no. What some peoples have already suffered, considered, and rejected, suddenly turns up among others as the very latest word. And here too the one and only substitute for experience which we ourselves have not had is art, literature. . . . We are

JOHN HEIDENRY *is a writer presently living in England.*

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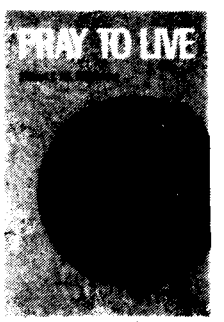

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able to communicate life experience from one whole nation to another, to communicate a different national experience many decades long which the second of the two has never experienced. And in the most favorable case this may save a whole nation from a path which is dangerous or mistaken or destructive."

Nevertheless *August 1914* is not at all a paraphrase of *War and Peace* or in fact perceptibly a Tolstoyan novel; and in many ways it is surprisingly inventive, and succeeds uniquely in modern literature, so far as I can tell, in actually describing the story of a people—not microscopically in the symbolic events of one or two parties, but of the vast Russian nation as it moved inevitably and blunderingly into war. Or in cinematic terms: as though only bit characters did their walk-on parts, stunt men executed their heroics, and the panorama unfolds without the benefit of a star performance.

So the book does defy some conventions. Reviewing the first fascicle of a work that may never be completed, one does not venture to make too many emphatic statements; but it is likely that, just as many of the characters are sure to turn up in some future volume, so many will never be heard from again. All of the literary objectives that center upon individuals have therefore been thrown over. Any sort of background sketch seems to suffice for a gunner in the trench, hospital nurse, a young lieutenant. They are, after all, only the people of Russia—any sort of people who just happen to be involved one way or other in the defeat of the Second Army in the battle of Tannenberg, in East Prussia, in August 1914. So one might even be led to agree that the characters are wind-up figures of a sort indeed—with the reservation that the mechanism inside them is the very Russian soul itself. Solzhenitsyn's Russians, as gradually they are surrounded and destroyed by the German army of Hindenburg, suffer the way you and I would suffer in the same circumstances; and at such an hour it would make little difference what my destiny would otherwise have been, or yours.

Solzhenitsyn does make some sort of attempt to write in a different style, that is, in addition to the familiar narrative of his previous works. I counted five in all and expect more to come: historical summations, aphorisms, movie sequences (a complicated, four-margined conjuration of "action" and pretty amateur), documentation, and an occasional first-person plural chat with the Russian people. In the entire book only one sentence stands out as memorable, and that not so much by its construction as for the oddity of what it describes. For once in the battle it looks as though the Russian forces will be able to strike a decisive and victorious blow. General Nechvolodov has readied his men for an attack; but a message arrives from divisional headquarters directing the officer not to engage the enemy. "Roshko gave a shriek; his general groaned as though he had been stabbed between the ribs, staggered back, and sank his teeth into the dry, splintery wood of the telegraph pole."

As historical reconstruction and, what is more, a masterful recapitulation of national mood and experience, Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914* is almost non-literary and uncontrived, in its reliance upon elementary fictional device, in order to exact from us a powerful extra-literary response. If the people in his book are all of a piece and indistinguishable, Solzhenitsyn seems to be saying that its readers are not. *Our* reaction and the shape of *our* individual destiny are indeed of a supreme importance—so long as we can live individual lives in a world of peace and not merge our identities in cannon fodder. Here perhaps the voice of Tolstoy and his disciple become one: War is an abomination. May this book impel you to embrace your fellow man.

Some remarks have been made about the translation; it seems fluent enough; but Michael Glenny, who was pressured into making the English-language version in time to meet an impossible deadline, has asked the publishers for an additional amount of time to work on emendations for a new edition; and it is to be hoped that this will be done. *Solzhenitsyn* by David Burg and George Feifer, also the center of some insignificant controversy, is relatively useful to anyone who desires about as much background information on its subject as is presently available.

Groups, Gimmicks, and Instant Gurus

WILLIAM R. COULSON

Harper & Row, $5.95

The Pit: A Group Encounter Defiled

GENE CHURCH & CONRAD D. CARNES

Outerbridge & Lazard, $6.95

WARREN SLOAT

Numbness characterizes us as a people. Many Americans have come to notice large holes in themselves, have caught on that they are over-brained and lacking in sense. Trying to get their thing on tight has brought them to the new existential techniques that we often associate with Esalen Institute. Of all the facets of this trend, "encounter groups" have caused the most controversy and proven most fascinating.

The encounter group offers an opportunity to break through the chains and padding so that people can meet, as they so seldom genuinely do otherwise. Encounter has also, however, tended to become identified with "turn-

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ing on," which is translated publicly into instant cure; and thus it may tend to attract people who come to it without the seriousness and commitment that true digging requires.

William Coulson, a member of the Center for the Studies of the Person, who has worked extensively with encounter groups, has misgivings about the shape it has taken. *Groups, Gimmicks, and Instant Gurus* grows out of his feeling that the standard form of encounter—the weekend marathon with strangers—is artificial and leads to games, and that something more organic should be tried.

Now what do we mean by artificial? Calling the family as an institution "the original encounter group," Coulson reports briefly, at the close of his book, on the use of encounter in his own nine-member family. Encounter groups, he writes, "are what families were like when people in families spent time together."

But therapy is a byproduct of the family, not its purpose. The family, clan, tribe, manages the land, clouts the tribe downstream, directs the securities. Therapy is not the main purpose of the inmates in Ken Kesey's novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest:* although they make of themselves a therapeutic community, their pressing purpose is to fight against their keepers.

So, although the weekend encounter group is secondarily artificial because it hurls strangers together, it is primarily artificial because its sole purpose is therapy.

That is a complication that Coulson and his associates at Western Behavioral Sciences Institute failed to work out in the WBSI extended encounter experiment with the Order of the Immaculate Heart Sisters.

Coulson devotes nearly half his book to this project, one of the first uses of encounter groups within institutional life. His conclusion is that encounter disrupts the institution. Put more strongly, in this case at least, encounter became the chief issue of division within the Order, which administers 59 schools, elementary to college, on the West Coast. My guess is that encounter groups do not work because they are a form in which strangers meet, and that people who work together in organizations hold meetings in other ways and for other purposes—purposes in which therapy is a byproduct.

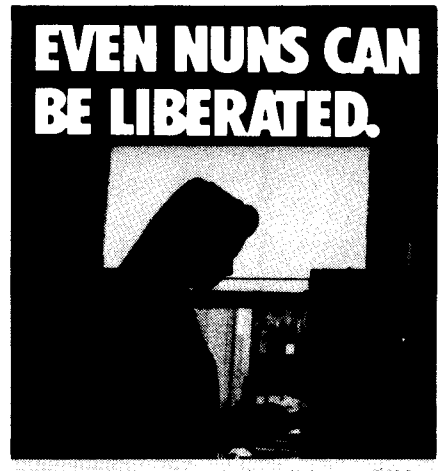
Although Coulson inveighs at length against gimmickry in encounter groups, he fails to realize that games naturally take over in stagnant situations. They replace movement. In some occasions, movement— not just the awareness so stressed in the encounter—is the natural way of breaking through numbness. This suggests politics. We can tingle in the awareness of the here-and-now and still be as paralyzed as ever. "The real opposites," Fritz Perls once said, "are impotence versus control madness," and the center of those opposites is resolved in power—not power amassed, but power spent.

Coulson writes unfortunately in a gee-whiz style that goes with the territory; postcard writing marks encounter group literature as jargon has characterized psychoanalytic writing. In their separate ways both styles are fuzzy and impenetrable.

The underside of encounter groups—their employment as a gimmick in the sales mentality of "success" and "leadership"—is burrowed into at its nadir in *The Pit*, an account of a four-day horror by Gene Church, who took part in it, and Conrad Carnes, who helped in the writing. They have produced a fascinating study.

The same personalities are continuously hovering around the literature of success, from Norman Vincent Peale's blend of piety, relaxation and salesmanship to Glenn Turner's "Dare To Be Great" rip-off; Vince Lombardi, St. Vincent of Green Bay, the late NFL coach who taught that "winning is the only thing"; W. Clement Stone, the advocate of Positive Mental Attitude who pastes slogans on his mirror; Napoleon Hill, who says that "whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

William Penn Patrick, chairman of the board of Holiday Magic, Inc., is



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another copy of these attitudes. Though cloaked under the rubric of "individualism," the attitudes resemble brainwashing, computer programming of the body by the mind—the very condition that drives people to Esalen for some touching and feeling.

This brand of robotry leads to repelling results at a motel in Palo Alto, as Church's eyewitness report shows. At the time, Church was connected with Holiday Magic, a pyramid sales organization dealing in cosmetics. Leadership Dynamics, Inc., the corporation that organized and staffed the encounter, has many of the same corporate officers as the cosmetics firm, and the participants paid the $1,000 fee with the understanding that it was expected.

Church deals mostly with the 24 male participants, with occasional glimpses into the parallel activities of 20 women holding a separate encounter. Other than the intensity of the experience, there is little resemblance between the Esalen undirected style and this totally-programmed parade of human degradation, which resembles Army basic training with a cadre of madmen, or hazing by a group of maniacs.

Though sometimes unintentionally amusing, it is a totally convincing account, and stirs up complex responses in the reader. Most impressive of all, it makes clear to us exactly how men could be manipulated into submitting to and even aiding in being whipped, stripped, forced to reveal sexual secrets, placed in coffins, and forced to eat garbage, vomit, and human excrement.

The book reveals the scatology, necrophilia and madness that lies under what passes in the so-called straight society for sane and wholesome attitudes. The scene in which Ben Gay, president of Holiday Magic and organizer of the encounter, reveals his ambition to become President is my favorite stroke in a book of brilliant renderings. I hope this extraordinary book gets the attention it deserves.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

REVIEWERS

WARREN SLOAT is a free-lance writer whose work has appeared in *The Nation*, *Ramparts* and other journals.

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The Edges of Language

PAUL M. VAN BUREN

Macmillan, $5.95

DANIEL C. MAGUIRE

God is still dead, but God-talk is alive in its legitimate place at the edges of language. This is the message of Paul M. Van Buren. Van Buren has been at work on Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and has set out to show what he sees as the implications of that work for Christian theology. Van Buren is impressed . . . very impressed . . . with Wittgenstein, Austin, and, indeed with the whole "linguistic turn" of philosophy. "It may be that Wittgenstein and Austin led us to the mountain from which a new land of understanding became visible," says Van Buren. Some of what he sees from that mountain is the burden of this brief book.

The bane of older philosophies, in Van Buren's view, is "the idea that a word is the name for an object." (This is what led linguistically naive people to think that "God" was the name for someone or something substantive!) But language is infinitely richer than a congeries of labels for objects. Language is so basic that "we cannot think without language." Nothing is "logically prior to, or independent of, language" . . . not even concepts. "It would be incorrect to say that Helen Keller first had the concept 'water' and then discovered a word to go with the concept." What she did have before the word, he avers, "is difficult to say." Quite simply, "language goes as far as human life and experiences do. . ."

The "central plains" of language are the clear zones where rules and conventions mark out the differences between sense and nonsense. When, however, one leaves the center of language to explore the edges, as poets, humorists, metaphysicians and religious men do, one leaves the realm of verification and clarity and "teeters" on the edge of "utter nonsense." "The sense of giddiness that comes at this point is a sign that we are stumbling along one edge of our language."

This probe to the edges of madness is not necessarily fruitless. It is, in T.S. Eliot's phrase, "a raid on the inarticuate." There is out on these edges, Van Buren allows, "the opportunity for discovery."

How does all this affect the Christian theology of God? Van Buren is certainly on target in stressing that God-talk is not on the "central plains" of language where rules and verifiability are easily engendered. Before the mock clarity of theists and atheists alike, Van Buren recalls the awe and mystery that have always characterized Christian religious experience. To those divines who, as someone once said, speak of God as though they had just had lunch with him, Van Buren has something to say in this regard.

However, both theists and atheists, Van Buren goes on, have been involved in a false debate. Both function out of linguistic naiveté, assuming that an object or a subject attaches to the label "God." Modern philosophers have discovered "that the word 'God,' when taken as the name of a supposed being" is "an incoherent word." Should not then this "incoherent word" be relegated to the rubble of nonsense? By no means. God-talk is onto something . . . not, of course, God.

Religious language, rather, is a way of "making much of" certain qualities and dimensions of life in a way that presses language to its limits, and "almost" to the point of nonsense. Thus when a Christian talks of the oneness and the fatherhood of God, he is not giving attributes of a substantive "God"; rather, he is speaking of *fatherhood*. "He wants to push on and say what we men are together as brothers might be imagined to be, had they one perfect father." Thus, "the Christian sometimes cries 'Father!' (a balancing act on the outer edge of language initiated by Jesus of Nazareth)."

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The word "God," you see, is "a speech-act acknowledging the limits of speech." Van Buren argued in *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* that the word "God" was dead. The word rises from the dead in *Edges*, not exactly glorious and immortal, but "just barely but legitimately within our language." Religious language is legitimate because it may make more room for man, not because it makes room for a living, trans-verbal God.

This book will provide some interesting grist for theology classroom mills. It will do this, not so much because it is provocative in the academically admirable sense as because it is provoking in the sense that Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* was provoking. It oversimplifies a large and mysterious question and it rings with implicit anathemas for those who would defer their Amen. There are some crucial absences in the "linguistic" epistemology of this book.

First of all, and most basically, it confines human experience and indeed reality within the narrowly defined limits of a particular view of language. It does not come to grips with the ineffable. It makes little of the common experience of persons who know and experience and mean *more* than they can say. Language, though symbiotically conjoined to thought, is essentially subsequent to it. Conscious life is larger than language. It is a large error to miss this.

Secondly, Van Buren has no development of the cognitive role of affectivity. Linguisticality is too confining for that rich phenomenon which Bergson called the "genius of will." As John Macquarrie says in *Principles of Christian Theology*: "We are, however, disclosed to ourselves, and being is disclosed, in affection and violation as well as in cognition, or perhaps better expressed, all affective and conative experience has its own understanding." Not all of that understanding is within the tender grasp of language.

An analysis of symbol is also conspicuously lacking in *Edges*. The edges of language would have been the natural "place" for a development of this rich mode of language, but one looks for it in vain.

Van Buren also underestimates the significance of moral experience for those who would probe the mysteries that are our setting. He says that in living a moral life, we need never come anywhere near the edges of language. It is a common moral persuasion of men, however, that persons are worth living for, suffering for, and even worth dying for. The meaning of that persuasion is immense for those who study the sacred.

In a word, though Van Buren works hard at it, and is, at times, ingenious in his efforts, he does not really make a case for God-talk without God. There are too many unexamined presuppositions in his linguistic positivism and he has too many doors unopened or peremptorily closed. It is a cramping prospectus he offers to *homo religiosus*.

The Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers Book

ARLENE CROCE

Outerbridge & Lazard, $9.95

DAVID DENBY

So many bad or dishonest books on old movies and movie stars are released every year that we may become cynical about all movie books; or, even worse, we may get so disgusted with the omniverous nostalgia racket that we begin to doubt whether *anything* from the movie past was really much good. When indomitable but untalented box-office heavies like Clark Gable and Joan Crawford are placed on the same level as the great movie performers, it becomes easy to wonder if our memories of those performers haven't played us false. Nostalgia as a general attitude is hopelessly stupid and self-dramatizing; it messes distinctions, confuses values, and remains a pain in the neck to anyone trying to write honestly about popular culture.

It's against this squalid publishing background that Arlene Croce's first-rate book on the Astaire-Rogers films is so welcome. Formerly a movie critic, in recent years Miss Croce has devoted herself to dance criticism, and since 1965 she has put out her own magazine, *Ballet Review*. From the authoritative way she writes about dance movement and from her erudite asides on the history of popular dancing it is obvious that she's specially equipped for the subject. But, more than expertise, Miss Croce has intelligence, and she's found the right tone. The Astaire-Rogers routines, unlike the ones devised by Busby Berkeley, will never be camp; they will remain what they were at the time—popular art at its exhilarating best. Since Miss Croce is

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sure of the quality of what she's talking about, she has no need of that defensive ironic whimsy that ruins so much writing about popular culture. Nor does she make false claims to justify the existence of her book (a typical ploy in this field): she is ardent and infectious in her praise of the dancing and also of the music by Porter, Berlin, Kern, and Gershwin, that graced the series, but she has no illusions about the mediocre farce plots, the endless comedy routines (Eric Blore and Edward Horton had their moments but Victor Moore was a ghastly bore), and the sluggish direction.

Obviously at home with musicals, she can tell us what one of these fantasies "means" without making a fool of herself, as in this description of *Top Hat:* "In the class-conscious Thirties, it was possible to imagine characters who spent their lives in evening dress—to imagine them as faintly preposterous holdovers from the Twenties, slipping from their satin beds at twilight, dancing the night away and then stumbling, top-hatted and ermine-tangled, out of speakeasies at dawn. It was a dead image, a faded cartoon of the pre-Crash, pre-Roosevelt, Prohibition era, but it was the only image of luxury that most people believed in, and *Top Hat* revived it as a corrected vision of elegance." This kind of tact, with its mixture of skepticism and understanding, is unique in books of this sort.

"He epitomized the classless 'aristocratic' American of the Thirties," Miss Croce writes of Fred Astaire, and in another place she remarks on the "peculiar beauty" of his face when he sings, the "intense look of romantic ardor." It was this fusion of style and feeling that made the Astaire temperament extraordinary. He was elegant but not precious; self-assured but not self-aggrandizing; attentive but not oversolicitous—a tease with an earnest heart. For men of my father's generation he was a cherished ideal. His clothes were brilliant, his singing of surpassing intelligence, and his dancing . . .

This was the finished Astaire, the Astaire of *Swing Time* and *Shall We Dance;* but when he first entered the movies in 1933, he was rather lost—temporarily without a definite persona or a partner (his sister and peerless stage-partner Adele had just retired). Of his brief couplings with Joan Crawford and Dolores Del Rio, Miss Croce remarks: "He had magnificent aplomb but it was a callow, collegiate sort of aplomb . . . Both ladies were too grand, too graciously accommodating; they underwent The Dance as if it were a purifying ordeal . . . In Ginger Rogers Astaire met a kind of genial resistance. She brought out his toughness and also his true masculine gallantry."

Rogers had been in vaudeville as a teenager, had played flappers on stage and in the movies, and in the Thirties she quickly became one of the new tough Depression-era comediennes. She never lost that smart sexiness, the insouciant, wisecracking facade; but when dancing with Astaire something else emerged, a deep emotional engagement that made her a star. In the heart of her book Miss Croce traces the emotional qualities of the Astaire-Rogers relationship from movie to movie, number to number—an ideal romance, with all the tensions, excitements, and joys of love intensified through the expressiveness of dance. She pays homage to the joyous casual banter that holds sway most of the time, but it's the great romantic duets she loves most, those uncanny moments, like Mozart's exquisite modulations into a minor key, when the playfulness stops and the dancing seems to express the deepest longing, satisfaction, or loss.

They danced, but they weren't alone, and a great deal of work was done around them. Miss Croce covers each of the films in detail, untangling the responsibilities, evaluating the different contributions and telling us how it was all done. We learn a great deal not only about dancing but also about Hollywood filmmaking and the history of the film musical. The photographs are innumerable, well-chosen, and clearly identified. In all, an ideal movie book and a model for future writers.

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Michael Novak (Cont.)

intelligible ideas are given to this office for transmutation into an ecclesiastical Latin which invariably suggests the *opposite* of what is in-

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tended. The history of Catholic apologetics is a history of explaining, "But we don't mean *that*. Assumption doesn't literally mean going up like a rocket into the sky." Why call it "assumption" then?

Politics in the United States requires an ecumenical effort to find out what opposing parties actually mean by their favorite symbols. Some disagreements always remain. But they are often far less damaging in actual experience and practice than in their traditional rhetorical statement. A political hermeneutics is badly needed in the Democratic party.

Democrats must face the fact that a large body of their number is college-educated, reasonably mobile and affluent, moved by a body of symbols—conscience, compassion, humanism, sensitivity—that, to another large body of Democrats, sounds like false consciousness, hypocrisy and a mask for raw power. Contrariwise, symbols that move the second body of Democrats—hard work, love of country, loyalty, obedience, duty, law and order—deeply offend the first body.

The issues between these groups are not *merely* symbolic. Actual political programs and initiatives are at stake. But we can turn our attention from the *dreams* cherished by both large bodies, to the relatively far more narrow range of *actual* political possibilities open to either side. The real world is not a world of dreams, for either group. Why not help each other out?

—In matters of national defense, for example, one side is likely to stress security, power and hardware, the other to stress humane priorities, defense cuts and cultural rather than military initiatives in foreign affairs. In actual practice, a strong military force is required by this or any other nation. Such a force will be more expensive the more highly paid and trained its personnel, and the more flexible and various its methods of operation and preparedness.

The effort to restructure the military profession and its role in American life, or in that of any other nation, necessarily encounters great inertia, resistance and powerful, entrenched interests. No group has a magic wand of dictatorship for wiping out all opposition and starting completely afresh. In proportion as people are committed to democratic persuasion and democratic procedures, reform is necessarily piecemeal.

All parties to the debate over national defense, therefore, are in fact talking about differing ranges of possibility, different estimates of how much can be done, how fast. The more politically concrete the judgments, the less certitude there is about what can in fact be done and what the consequences of trying to do it will be (including the intensity and power of reaction aroused in the opposition).

—Care, then, should be taken in choosing concrete targets of action, so as not to polarize one another over what must necessarily be an uncertain practical judgment. Every single case must not be made a loyalty test.

A new Democratic realism requires both sides of the party (to speak as if there were only two) to concentrate on concrete programs and concrete estimates of probability, rather than on ideological resistance to each other's manifestos. A broad concrete program is better than a single concrete case made cosmically significant.

It is difficult to find one common ideology for all, and difficult not to polarize around *some* single concrete cases. But a *set* of concrete programs can win the support of all, with room for disagreement in concrete cases.

Both sides could use more *concrete* utopian thinking, less *dreamlike* utopian thinking. There are very few practical ideas around in *either* group.

—No one has yet proposed, for example, a practical set of programs for *rewarding* urban and suburban integration. Scattersite housing, open housing laws, court-ordered school integration and the like are being forced upon some citizens by other citizens, using laws which state ideals but whose administrative consequences were never clearly worked out. A system of rewards for compliance might change the whole climate of respect for such laws.

If integrated neighborhoods were guaranteed stability over time, given excellent city services, protected by mortgage insurance, made demonstrably safer and more peaceful, the success of integration might be assured. Economic and social rewards are stronger than racial animosities in some cultural worlds.

The invention of such a system is surely not beyond our intelligence or our administrative skills. It does not really matter whether the CDM or the ADA, the new politics or the old, devises such a program first. The nation needs it.

—Democratic realism means mutual respect. Both sides have made sharp accusations against each other's motives and interests. Perhaps at last both are sufficiently self-conscious and chastened. Neither is pure. Neither is strong enough alone. Each can afford to admit its own deficiencies to the other. Together they can invent a set of attainable political programs, possibly even a ten-year plan.

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